A CHILD'S LIFE OF ST. JOAN OF ARC

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A CHILD'S LIFE
OF
ST. JOAN OF ARC

JOAN LISTENING TO THE VOICES

A CHILD'S LIFE OF ST. JOAN OF ARC

BY

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DEDICATION

Upon thy brow, O dear and dauntless Maid,
  There rests, at last, the Coronal of Glory.
Thy Mother's Sacred Seal, so long delayed,
  Has closed the volume of thy wondrous story.
To-day, the children offer at thy feet
  A simple flower — love-planted and love-given.
O thou, than whom was never child more sweet,
  St. Joan of Arc — remember us in Heaven!

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A CHILD'S LIFE OF ST. JOAN OF ARC

CHAPTER I

ST. JOAN'S BIRTH AND ANCESTRY

O Meuse, beside thy waters clear,
So gently murmuring by,
The Voices, whispering in her ear,
Taught her to live—and die.

At last she has come into her own. At last, after nearly five hundred years the Maid of France has taken her rightful place in the ranks of the Church Triumphant, and has been placed upon the Calendar of Saints, having received from the hands of the Sovereign Pontiff the highest honors it is possible for the representative of Christ on earth to

confer. It was Pius X, of saintly memory, who first elevated the Maid among the Blessed and she was canonized on May 13, 1920, by our Holy Father Pope Benedict XV.

By no country on earth, except her own, has this news been welcomed with more enthusiasm than by America; especially since the close of the war, during which the American soldiers rivaled the French in their devotion to her, putting themselves under her protection on the battle-field and wearing—Catholic and Protestant alike—her medal, as a talisman against danger and death.

The latest statue erected to her memory is that on Riverside Drive, New York. It is of bronze, thirty-five feet high, and is the only statue ever erected to a woman in that great emporium of the world. The money was raised by subscription, principally in small sums by those unable to give more—a genuine gift of the people to the great

heroine of patriotism, piety, and humanity.

Even those least familiar with her wonderful story are aware that she ranks among the greatest heroines of the world, while many of those better informed have but a hazy idea of the times and conditions under which she lived. They were times of great stress and disturbance. France, in particular, had long been in the throes of civil war, with all the evils attendant upon a distracted and disunited kingdom.

Worn out with internal strife, Burgundy at length appealed to England for relief, an appeal which was eagerly welcomed by the sister-kingdom, seeing in the disorganization and weakness of her neighbor across the channel an opportunity for the conquest she had long desired.

Charles VII, the King of France, had succeeded his father to the throne during this distracted period; some of his subjects acknowledged his supremacy, others were

not so loyal. An exile and a wanderer from his capital, he had never been crowned, and was still commonly spoken of as the Dauphin, because the diadem of sovereignty had not yet been formally placed upon his brow. Never a brave warrior, he preferred to evade responsibility, whenever possible. It was at this critical period that the star of St. Joan of Arc rose upon the horizon—a sudden, brilliant and wonderful star, quickly to reach the zenith of glory, too soon to fade into the darkness of ingratitude.

Even before her time, her native Lorraine and its sister-province, Alsace, originally belonging to Germany, though on the French bank of the Rhine, had always been more French than German. For France they had fought and bled, to France they had pledged their loyalty and devotion. To them the German tongue was almost unknown, the people aliens, their habits, customs and ideals as foreign, perhaps, as those

of Spain or Italy. Only a river separated them, but generation after generation had widened the barrier which divided them. Here, on the banks of the Upper Meuse, at Domremy, one of the numerous villages that nestle there, on January 6th, 1412—according to the most authentic records—St. Joan of Arc was born. Although, from all the great wars which from time to time devastated France, it bore scars of the tragedies in which it had taken part, it has always been, in the peaceful years between, an ideal and picturesque spot. Alas, in this last and most bloody of all wars, how often have the gently flowing waters of that beautiful river run crimson, dyed with the life-torrent of its faithful Lorrainers; its green banks, waving with garden-flowers, downtrodden beneath the tramp of many feet, its little islets, clothed with mossy verdure, grown hideous and ghastly, obliterated and forgotten their fragrant bushes of living green!

The father of St. Joan was named d'Arc, her mother Isabelle Romée. Up to the time of her birth there had been four children in the family, three boys and a girl, named Catherine, who died in her infancy. Her native village, save for the ravages which war has made, is very little changed since the day when the newly-born child was taken to the church for baptism. This church, toward which her innocent, childish feet were early bent, the scene of her prayers and aspirations, where she armed her soul with the shields of virtue, constancy, and courage, is more than lowly—it is poor, though full of harmonious colors, with one little corner which is shown to visitors as the spot where St. Joan was accustomed to pray.

On the threshold stands, or stood, a statue of St. Joan, more simple than devotional. Among the trees, at a few paces from the church, is, or was—we know not how war has left it—a bust of St. Joan in white mar-

ble. A stone's throw distant stands the dwelling in which she was born. "Trees envelop the walls with their overhanging branches," writes one who reverently visited it some years ago. "A third part of the roof, at least, is covered with ivy. Above the door, which is low, are three shields of armorial bearings—or, to speak more correctly, the door is surmounted by three escutcheons: that of Louis XI, who caused the cottage to be embellished; that which was granted to one of the brothers of St. Joan named Lys; and a third bearing a star under three plowshares, to symbolize St. Joan's mission and the lowly condition of her parents." Jacques d'Arc was a man of good standing in the country, the proprietor of a farm, owning sheep, oxen, and cows. He and his wife were devout Christians and sincere patriots—French to the core of their loyal, honest hearts. They had seen France divided, the King of England master of

Paris, the King of France deserted, continually a prey to increasing misfortunes.

In the fields and by the firesides the terrible state of their country was the constant topic of conversation among these faithful villagers, and we read that it was the nightly custom of Isabelle to clasp her children's hands together and teach them to say, "O, God! save France!"

Into this pious family was born our heroine, who, as soon as she was able to speak and understand, began to love her desolated fatherland with an all-overpowering love. She was a true Frenchwoman, energetic and enthusiastic, quick on her feet, skillful with her hands, ready with swift smile and bright repartee, but above all things prudent, pious, and finding her greatest pleasure before the altar of God. She had an uncle who was a *curé,* and a cousin, Nicolas Romée, a religious in the Abbey of Cheminou, who later became her chaplain. She herself could

neither read nor write and learned her prayers, the *Ave Maria,* the Our Father, and the Creed, from the lips of her devoted mother.

CHAPTER II

THE VOICES AND ST. JOAN'S MISSION

Not far from the village of Domremy stood a lordly castle, long untenanted. In the garden was a chapel of Our Lady. In this garden St. Joan, in her hours of relaxation, was fond of walking and meditating alone. And it may be that here she first heard those mysterious Voices which came to her again and again, bidding her leave all things and hasten to the relief of France, a mission to which she had been destined by Almighty God.

There are two accounts of the manner in which St. Joan received this mysterious mission. The first of these relates that, being in her thirteenth year, she stood in her

father's garden, alone, at midday, reciting the *Angelus*. Suddenly a peculiar light, brighter than that of the sun, seemed to surround her, and looking upward she saw the figure of an angel which later she identified as that of St. Michael. Behind him hovered a multitude of smaller angelic forms, moving in the light of his great but gentle majesty.

"Joan, Joan!" said the Archangel. "Be good and religious! Love God and attend Mass regularly."

She had always loved God and taken the greatest delight in going to Mass. But the vision made a great impression on St. Joan and when it recurred again, the Angel said to her, "I am Michael, the protector of France." On another occasion he said, "Joan, the Kingdom of France is in sore straits," but promised her that the country would be saved, that God would raise a savior who would deliver the French from their enemies.

"Tell me his name!" cried St. Joan. "Let me know who is to save us!"

"It is yourself, daughter of God," answered the Archangel. "Go you must!"

"But I am only a poor girl! I do not know my a, b, c's. I can not ride a horse or go to war!"

In spite of this declaration of her ignorance St. Joan firmly believed in the words of the Archangel, which were afterward supplemented by advice and counsel from St. Margaret and St. Catherine, but as yet, in her humility, St. Joan made no effort to act upon them, breathing no word concerning them except to her confessor, who, as is generally the case with priestly advisers, was slow to countenance her revelations.

As St. Joan was always happy and gay, for a long time no one suspected the holiness of her life. Under a smiling exterior, she reflected a great deal, wondering, hesitating, yet never doubting the summons she quietly

awaited, to enter upon a task which God had called her to fulfill.

St. Joan was now past sixteen years of age and the Voices, positive and persistent, gave her no peace. She was bidden to go to Robert of Baudricourt, who lived in the Castle of Vaucouleurs. He was the commander of the last fortress of these provinces, which still belonged to France. A brave man, a rough soldier, accustomed to battle-fields and danger, as unlikely to give heed to the visionary announcements of this young peasant maid as any man could be, still he was the one St. Joan had been told to seek as it was only through his assistance she could go to the King at Touraine, as she had been told by her Voices to do.

By this time St. Joan had declared her mission to her parents, who thought her mad and refused to give her any assistance. But she relied on the promise of God, who, she felt assured, would send her the help which

she patiently awaited. Nor was she mistaken. A cousin named Durand Laxart, who on account of his age she called "uncle," had come to visit the family, became greatly impressed by what St. Joan told him and offered to take her whither she wished to go, if her parents would give their consent. This they finally did, though with reluctance, and Durand asked:

"What is it you would have me do, Joan?"

"Take me to Robert of Baudricourt," she answered, and they set forth.

But when they had arrived at the Castle and Durand had told their errand, Robert exclaimed:

"Your niece is mad. Give her a good beating and take her back to her father!"

"It will be another time, then," said St. Joan, quietly, and they went their way home to Domremy. St. Joan, at least, was not discouraged, as she had been warned by the Voices that at first she would meet with many

obstacles. But we have no record of a beating!

It was in December, 1428, or January, 1429, that, accompanied as before by her cousin, St. Joan once more left the home she was never again to see, save perhaps in dreams on the battle-fields, or within the gloom of her prison cell. She may have had a presentiment that she would not return, for this time she wept and dwelt with lingering glance upon the home and friends she was leaving behind. From the beginning this journey seemed more hopeful than the last. Won by her simplicity and piety, people were kind to her on the way. They even offered her garments like those worn by the soldiers, or similar to them, that is to say, a tunic and short skirt, instead of breeches, which St. Joan, to the day of her death, refused to wear. She, no doubt, accepted them, for she was thus attired when setting forth to see the King.

"But are you not afraid?" they would ask. "It is a long way to Chinon, where the Dauphin is. The roads are infested with enemies who will stop you."

St. Joan replied:

"I am not afraid of the men-at-arms; the way lies open before me. The Lord is on my side. It is He who will prepare the paths which will lead me to the Dauphin. I was born for that."

Disarmed by St. Joan's persistence and seizing at any hope in the dark days of distress which were falling more and more heavily upon France, Robert of Baudricourt, at length consented to assist the young girl, whom people had already begun to call the "messenger of God." He wrote a letter to the King, gave her a sword, and bade her Godspeed. She was clothed in dark colors, doublet, hose, and a short skirt, with her hair cut short around her head, like a boy's. And thus, in God's name she began her jour-

ney to the King, victory, and glory, later, by a cruel turn of Fortune's wheel, to be succeeded by adversity, disgrace, imprisonment, and martyrdom.

The second account of the calling of St. Joan differs but slightly from the first. An intelligent girl, given to reflection, as St. Joan was from her infancy, would naturally hear and even see a great deal of the strife which was devastating the country. There was little else talked of in the villages, or around the evening hearth. Peddlers, pilgrims, and other travelers passing to and fro, would bring the news from day to day. The sorrows of her uncrowned King could not fail to touch St. Joan's gentle, sympathetic heart, which knew but three loves: that of her family, her religion, and her sovereign.

It was in "the Oak Wood," on the edge of the village of Domremy, says this narration, that St. Joan first saw her Visions. This wood, where, feeding on the acorns that cov-

ered the ground, the swine were also sheltered, was infested by wolves, of which the children of the neighborhood were very much afraid. Sheep were also pastured not far away, and it is said that St. Joan had no fear of the wild animals, who never harmed her flock, whatever they might do to those of her companions. "The birds did perch upon her shoulders and her knees, feeding from her lap," says the old chronicle, "because she was a child of God and the Blessed Mary, and the saints loved her. Once when she was thirteen," it goes on to state, "she ran with the other girls a foot-race, for a prize, a bunch of flowers. So easily she won, so fleetly she ran, that her feet seemed not to touch the ground. One of her companions cried, 'Joan, I see you flying close to earth.' When she returned home her mother scolded her for remaining away, and the Maid was sad. It was then that for the first time a bright and shining cloud seemed

to pass before her eyes and from the clouds came a voice saying, 'Joan, you must change your course of life and do marvelous deeds, for the King of heaven has chosen you to aid the King of France.' After this the appearances continued day and night until St. Joan went away."

"How did you know," inquired one of her questioners at her last trial, "the names of your heavenly visitors?"

"Because they told me. First came St. Michael, and promised me the others, who afterward came. Angels were in their company. Their voices were gentle, beautiful, and sweet."

The Maid had seen and heard them in the wood, while tending her sheep, when communing in solitude with her own soul, when in recreation with her companions. She had never doubted their reality, never suspected or feared they might be evil spirits deceiving her.

The second and final attempt St. Joan made, according to this recital, was in December, 1428, or January, 1429. She went first to the house of her cousin, Durand Laxart, who lived at Little Burey, between Domremy and Vaucouleurs. Discouraged by the passivity of Baudricourt, she left her cousin's house and repaired to Vaucouleurs, where she remained for three weeks at the house of Henri and Katherine Royer, who became very fond of her, persisting in their friendship to the end.

"Her first gleam of hope," writes Lang, "appears to have come from a young man-at-arms, aged twenty-seven, who had some acquaintance with her father and mother. He was named Jean de Metz, or from his estate, Jean de Novelonpont. He was one of those who might have said:

My harness is my house,
My land beloved—strike.

In heat and cold, by day or night,
War is my pride—my life!

"But his heart was true to France and the rightful king. While the Maid dwelt with the Royers in Vaucouleurs, about the first or second week of February, 1429, Jean met her in 'her poor red woman's dress.' Said he to her, '*Ma nièce*, what are you doing here? Must the King be walked out of his kingdom and must we all be English?' St. Joan answered, 'I am come to a royal town to ask Robert of Baudricourt to lead me to the King. But Baudricourt cares nothing for me and what I say; none the less, I must be with the King by mid-Lent, if I wear my legs down to the knees. No man in the world—kings, nor dukes, nor the daughter of the Scottish King—can recover the Kingdom of France, nor hath our King any succor save from myself, though I would liefer

be sewing beside my poor mother. For this deed is not convenient to my station, yet go I must, and this deed I must do, because my Lord so wills it."

" 'Who is your Lord?' "

" 'My Lord is God,' " said the Maid.

"He answered with an emotion that thrills us as we read. 'Then I, Jean, swear to you, Maid, my hand in your hands, that I, God helping me, will lead you to the King, and I ask when you will go?' "

" 'Better to-day than to-morrow—better to-morrow than later.' "

We read that Robert of Baudricourt, in company with a priest, visited her at the house of the Royers, and it was probably after this visit that he decided to yield to her entreaties. Certain it is that soon after this St. Joan began her eventful journey. Friends whom she had made during her sojourn at Little Burey and Vaucouleurs, as-

sembled to see her depart. And yet they were fearful of the perils she might encounter on the way.

"You should not go!" one said. "The roads are everywhere beset by men-at-arms." But she replied, "The way is made clear before me. I have my Lord, who makes the path smooth to the gentle Dauphin, for to do this deed I was born."

She bent and kissed the sword,
  Bowed low to Baudricourt,
Ready all ills to face,
  All perils to endure.

To friends a parting smile,
  To Heaven an upward glance.
Then, through the gathering dusk,
  She rode away to France.

JOAN SEES A VISION

CHAPTER III

ST. JOAN GOES TO THE KING

WHAT manner of man was the uncrowned King of France, whom St. Joan, with her two traveling companions, and their servants, accompanied also by the King's messenger, journeyed one hundred and fifty leagues to see and counsel? History, on that point, is divided. One account describes him as generous and kind, gentle and handsome, well-spoken and full of pity for the poor.

His physical advantages, according to this chronicler, won him the favor of the people. He was fond of games, luxurious in his habits and devoted to St. Michael, St. Joan's own Archangel. Another narrator gives an entirely different picture, call-

ing him "ugly, with gray, wandering eyes, nose thick and bulbous, knock-kneed and awkward." His portraits belie this unflattering description. However, it is not likely that if it were true, the painters who had the honor of portraying the features of the royal personage would have made the portrait very lifelike. His traducers represent him as without ambition, hiding from his subjects in holes and corners, the tool of his ministers and the slave of his favorites. A life sacrificed in his behalf was a life thrown away. Both his friends and foes unite, however, in saying that he was indolent, and his conduct, subsequent to meeting with St. Joan of Arc, shows him to have been deficient in those qualities most to be admired in a king—bravery and loyalty to his friends.

But St. Joan, blindly following the direction of the heavenly messengers, in whom she implicitly believed, paused not to weigh his defects or his virtues; to her he was the de-

scendant of St. Louis, of the holy blood of France, God's chosen representative of justice, honor, and loyalty.

And to outward view, what manner of maid was she who sallied forth from Vaucouleurs upon her great adventure? Many statues have been made and many pictures painted of her, but none that seem to have been inspired by one who had seen her in life. Not all of these are beautiful, they differ greatly, according to the ideals of the artist who endeavored to reproduce her features in canvas or in marble. From all of them combined one might, with the eye of fancy, reproduce a composite picture in which the predominant traits would be innocence, dignity, sweetness, and an entire unconsciousness of self.

It has been said by most of St. Joan's contemporaries—and we like to imagine that she was beautiful—that God, having chosen her for His messenger and fashioned her

soul so divinely, would also have endowed the shell of her divine spirit with beauty of form, and softness of color, with grace, slenderness, and a sweet dignity pervading all her looks and words.

Says one who describes her: "Joan was beautiful in face and figure, with steady gray eyes, bright and smiling." Her hair, they tell us, was black and wavy. We can fancy the light breeze lifting it about her forehead as she sat under the old oak, or wandered in the garden of the deserted castle; we can see it just reaching her fine, straight shoulders, floating in the wind as she skimmed the surface of the greensward in the victorious races, or hastened, on flying feet, to rescue from the brambles one of her beloved lambs; or imagine it falling—a dusky veil over her clear, unlined forehead and soft, smooth, olive cheeks—as she knelt, face buried in her hands, before Our Lady's altar in the little village church.

One of her own countrymen, Bastien Lepage, dissatisfied with the various and altogether dissimilar pictures of her, felt that he could paint a true portrait of the Maid of Arc. He has made her a homely figure, a peasant, clumsy but pleasing, a daughter of toil. But the mouth is firm and sweet, and the eyes are wonderful. She seems to be listening to the Voices that were constantly advising and beseeching her—looking not upon the outer world, but inwardly praying, reflecting, drinking in the visions which were her familiar companions, but which none but herself were permitted to see. This picture hangs in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, and those who are privileged to see it there, though they may wish that St. Joan had been made more beautiful in face and form, cannot but admit that it portrays, beyond all doubt, the exquisite purity of a soul untouched by sin.

Gifted with perfect health, St. Joan's

presence diffused vitality wherever she went. Her manners were those of a lady rather than a peasant, though as the latter she was possessed of the sturdy independence and self-respect characteristic, to this day, of her race. No doubt from her familiar and gracious St. Margaret and St. Catherine she imbibed something of the spiritual poise and heavenly gentleness she always referred to in describing them.

So it was that with head erect, shoulders thrown back, gray eyes gazing earnestly into the distance, raven hair now close-cropped under a tight black cap, and strong, if unaccustomed, hands firmly clasping the reins of her horse St. Joan went on her way through the night, arriving early next morning at the town of St. Urbain. And then on to Fierbois, where there was a famous shrine of St. Catherine which St. Joan visited with great devotion. Thence to Chinon, where the King was lodged.

After breakfasting at the inn, with her usual determination and fearless spirit she repaired at once to the Castle. Baudricourt had written a letter to the King in her behalf, but evidently it had not yet arrived, for there was some difficulty in admitting her.

Finally, after these preliminary objections had been overcome, she was told that the King had consented to see her, and again mounting her horse St. Joan proceeded toward the Castle. A story is related of this advance which, if true, would seem to be the first manifestation of the gift of prophecy which, as subsequent events have proven, she undoubtedly had received from God.

Passing her on horseback, a man swore at and insulted her, using foul language. St. Joan looked at him calmly as she answered, "In God's name do you swear, and you so near death?" With these words she pursued her way; an hour later the man fell into the water and was drowned.

CHAPTER IV

THE KING SANCTIONS ST. JOAN

NIGHT had fallen. Lights gleamed throughout the Castle; the men-at-arms received the little company at the gates. They marched through the courtyard to the wide open doors, when St. Joan dismounted. A cheerful fire burned in the broad chimney, a hundred torches in their iron sconces leaned from the scarred walls of somber gray. To-day that chamber is a roofless ruin, though the wall with the huge fireplace has not yet crumbled to decay.

Into that assembly came St. Joan, modest but embarrassed by the presence of the King and his knights, clad in such gorgeous garments as she had never seen. There were priests and prelates scattered among them

—counselors, men of law, scribes. It is said that the King was not present when she entered, but came in later, after the stir made by her entrance had subsided.

Her cool gray eyes swept the assembly, then were lowered to the ground. Evidently St. Joan realized that the monarch was not among them. She made no attempt to speak until he entered, "When," says de Gaucourt, who was present, "she came forward with great humility and simplicity, and I heard those words which she spoke to the King, thus, 'Most noble Dauphin, I come from God to help you and your realm.'" The Dauphin drew her apart, and spoke with her long. It has also been said that St. Joan revealed to Charles her knowledge of a secret known only to himself and Almighty God, and thus gave proof to him of her exalted mission. This fact was brought forward at her trial, and she did not deny it.

Charles, however, was not entirely carried

away by her declaration. He appointed her to no task or office. She was sent to the Tower of Coudray, where she was placed under the care of Guillaume Bellier and his pious wife. A boy of fourteen or fifteen, Louis de Goutes, of poor but noble family, was given her for a page, which shows that she was treated with great respect. She was frequently summoned to the King, but spent, it is said, when alone, much of her time in prayer.

Meanwhile the city of Orleans was being besieged by the English. They were not making progress but were ordered from England not to desist, though the Duke of Bedford, in command, thought their case hopeless. The French were making a gallant fight, increasing their forces from day to day.

The young Duke d'Alençon, hearing of St. Joan's mission and her eagerness to participate in the stirring events which were

taking place, went to Coudray to see her, immediately gave his adherence to her cause and always, thereafter, remained her faithful friend.

At last St. Joan was sent to Poitiers, where learned doctors asked her many questions, to all of which she replied with her usual simple directness, sincere and unabashed. Her character was investigated; for six weeks she was under the watchful questioning of churchmen, counselors and men-at-arms, who found nothing in it but records of purity, piety, humility, and devotion to the cause to which she believed herself to have been called by God.

After much deliberation it was decided that she should be sent to Tours, then under the direction of the Queen of Sicily, who was, also, the King's mother-in-law. Feeling that this was another step on the way, St. Joan rejoiced at the change. It was at Tours that she received her suit of armor,

in which her warlike assaults were wrought, while she was leading attacks on fortified places, standard in hand.

Andrew Lang thus describes this armor: "The armor included a helmet which covered the head to its junction with the neck, while a shallow cup of steel protected the chin, moving on the same hinge as the *salade* —a screen of steel, which in battle was drawn down over the face to meet the chin-plate, and when no danger was apprehended, was turned back, leaving the face visible. A neck-piece, or gorget of five over-lapping steel plates, covered the chest as far as the breast-bone, where it ended in a point above the steel corselet, which itself apparently was clasped in front, down the center, ending at the waist. The hip joints were guarded by a band, consisting of three over-lapping plates of steel; below this, over each thigh, was a kind of skirt of steel, open for the freedom of riding. There were strong,

thick shoulder-plates, yet one of these was pierced through and through by an arrow or cross-bow bolt, at close quarters, when St. Joan was mounting a scaling-ladder in an attack upon the English fort at the bridge-head of Orleans.

"The steel sleeves had plates with covered hinges, to guard the elbows; there were steel gauntlets, thigh pieces, knee-joints, greaves, and steel shoes. The horse, a heavy-weight carrier, had his armor of steel, and the saddle rose high at the pummel and behind the back. A *hucque,* or cloak, of cloth of gold, velvet, or other rich material, was worn over the armor."

A few words as to the famous mystic sword of the Maid. We only know what she related to the judges in 1431. "While I was at Tours, or Chinon, I sent for a sword in the church of St. Catherine of Fierbois where my Voices told me one could be found behind the altar. It was quickly unearthed,

all covered with rust. It was marked with five crosses; and was not deep in the earth, as well as I can remember. When it was found the clergy rubbed it and the rust readily fell off. The man who wrought it was a merchant of Tours who sold armor. The clergy of Fierbois gave me a sheath, the people of Tours gave me two, one of red velvet, one of gold, but I had a strong leather sheath made for it."

By the command of the Dauphin St. Joan was given a house and attendants, while Jean de Metz remained her faithful squire and was appointed custodian of her purse. This man was once fined a few *sous* for swearing. St. Joan was shocked at such a practice; hers was a holy war, religion at the root of everything she did, therefore she bade Jean invoke God to banish profane words from his lips, for only thus, she said, not by fines or threats of punishment, could he succeed in preserving them pure from blasphemy. At this

time she announced that she had been told by St. Margaret and St. Catherine to take a standard. She was now become an important personage, she was to be placed in command of a company, and it behooved her, said the Voices, to bear the standard of her cause.

The standard, which St. Joan had ordered made according to her instructions, was of white linen embroidered with silk and embellished with *fleur-de-lys,* and bearing the names JESUS, MARIA. Immediately under this inscription was depicted an image of God, seated amongst the clouds and holding in His hand the globe, while two angels were represented, kneeling, offering Him a *fleur-de-lys.* On the other side were the arms of France, supported by two angels. In addition to the standard St. Joan had a small pennant, upon which was portrayed the Annunciation. St. Joan bore the standard with her in every battle. Strange that

THE TAKING OF ORLEANS BY JOAN OF ARC

its white brilliancy did not attract her enemies to compass her death, but it did not. It was her safeguard and her shield. No man was to slay her in battle—neither did she ever slay. Her hands, free of human blood, were to remain always white.

CHAPTER V

ST. JOAN LEADS THE TROOPS TO VICTORY

FROM Tours St. Joan was sent to Poitiers, where she was questioned by a commission of ecclesiastics who pronounced her "sane and holy," and advised that she be suitably conducted to Orleans, fully believing as they did in the genuineness of her call from God.

First at Tourelles, later at Orleans, with an army of about twelve thousand men she led her troops to victory. For a long time the place seemed impregnable. But after the second assault, when the French had been twice driven back and the recall was about to be sounded, the Maid came to Dunois and begged him to wait yet a little while, retiring into a neighboring vineyard, where

she prayed for more than a quarter of an hour. Flying her standard, St. Joan bade the troops follow her and plunged once more into the thick of the fight. Although she had been wounded earlier in the day she seemed as fresh as though the battle had just begun. Prayer had soothed and strengthened her. The victory was all her own. "Within less than a week of her first day under fire," writes the chronicler, "this girl of seventeen had done what Wolfe did on the heights of Abraham, what Bruce did at Bannockburn; she had gained one of the 'fifteen decisive battles' of the world."

In spite of her painful wound she at once started for Chinon, where the King awaited her. But he met her at Tours, after having sent official despatches with news of the victory to other towns. When St. Joan caught sight of him she dismounted and threw herself at his feet, where she reverently saluted him.

Raising her up he leaned forward and with much emotion gravely kissed her forehead. But she had not come to seek for compliments and at once informed him that she needed money and soldiers, and begged that he would permit her to accompany him to the city of Rheims.

"Sire," she said to him, "it is time you were on the way to Rheims, there to be crowned."

Charles hesitated. On one side was St. Joan—on the other, advisers who told him it would be the wildest folly to count on a triumph at Rheims as long as the intervening town remained in control of the English.

"Come, let us march against them, then," said the Maid, undaunted.

And so they did, and from that day it was a conquering march to Jargeau, Meung, Beaugency, and the final victory of Patay. All this took place in seven days. On July 17, the King was solemnly crowned. The ceremony began at nine o'clock in the morn-

ing and is thus described by Pierre de Beauvais in a letter to the Queen of Sicily:

"It was a wondrous sight to see that fair mystery, for it was as solemn and as well-adorned with all things thereunto pertaining as if it had been ordered a year before. First, all in armor, and with banners displayed, the Marechal de Boussac with de Rais, Gravile, the Admiral and a great company, rode to meet the Abbot, who bore the *Sainte Ampoule* (the holy chrism). They rode into the minster and alighted at the entrance to the choir. The Archbishop of Rheims administered the coronation oath; he crowned and anointed the King, while all the people cried *'Noel, Noel'!* and the trumpet sounded so you might think the roof would be rent.

"And always during the mystery the Maid stood by the King, her standard in her hand. To see the goodly manners of the King and Maid was interesting, and she, kneeling,

weeping for joy, embraced his knees saying these words:

" 'Gentle King, now is accomplished the will of God, who decreed that I should raise the siege of Orleans and bring you to this city of Rheims to receive this solemn *sacring* (anointing), thereby showing that you are the true King, and that France should be yours.'

"And a wave of pity came upon all those who saw her, and many wept."

Prophetic tears! Already the mists of treachery and ingratitude were rising, a noxious miasma, from the minds and hearts of those, who, jealous of her achievements and fearful of what she might accomplish in the future—thus upsetting their own plans—resolved to crush and trample the lily that had so suddenly and fragrantly bloomed upon the lately arid soil of France.

In three short months St. Joan had fulfilled the mission to which the heavenly

powers had dedicated her, and now, according to her own declaration, her work was done. Thus far her Voices had led her; thereafter what she accomplished and endeavored to accomplish does not appear to have been by their command. On this slight foundation her enemies have tried to base the accusation that her mission was not from God, but was the delusion of a visionary, romantic girl. Others have maintained that, admitting her mission was from God, she proved false to her divinely-appointed vocation when, of her own volition, without guidance of the Voices, she continued her career after the coronation of the King at Rheims.

Their reasoning is not good. God does not always manifest His will by signs. St. Joan had been obedient to it, had fulfilled to the letter what had been appointed her to do. Her prudence, modesty, and simplicity had not altered between the time when she

first met the King at Chinon and stood beside him at the coronation, holding her spotless standard in her hand. To the King, on the day of his anointing, she said, it is true: "Gentle King, now is accomplished the good pleasure of God, who willed that you should come to Rheims to receive your sacred anointing, showing that you are a true King, and the one to whom the Kingdom should belong."

But France was not yet free. While, in the beginning, St. Joan had thought of nothing but retiring once more to her native village, after the deed she had been told to do was accomplished, she loved her fatherland and was willing, eager, to lay down her strength, health, life itself, to secure or aid in securing the freedom of her sorely-stricken country. True, the Voices had not told her to go on; neither had they warned her to lay down her arms. Possibly St. Joan felt that were she to resist the entreaties of those

who begged her to continue to fight for France and freedom, she might be accused of cowardice. That, her valiant soul could not have borne. She felt it to be her duty to persevere in the career which had been thrust upon her. Certainly it was not from love of war-like things that she consented, as is alleged by her own words: "And I would that it pleased God, my Creator, that I could return now, leaving my arms; and that I could go back to serve my father and mother in taking care of their flocks with my sister and brothers."

The coronation of the King was but the means to an end; by the restoration of peace to France, and the abolition of the numerous evils that always follow in the train of war, why turn from the plow now that the sowing of the seed promised a joyful harvest? Why turn her back upon her still distracted country, to retire to the peace and security of her native village?

It is recorded that as St. Joan stood there, rejoicing in the triumph of her rightful sovereign, herself the cynosure of thousands of admiring eyes, "she wept." Were they only joyful tears? Who can say that they were tears of unmixed happiness? Who can tell but that, having touched the height of felicity, the brave soul, fearing the future it felt itself obliged to face, did not tremble with a prophetic sorrow? If so, it was for a brief moment. Soon she was again ready for action. But a few days elapsed before she went forth to the relief of Compiègne, then besieged by the Burgundians.

CHAPTER VI

DEFEAT AND CAPTURE

St. Joan had ardently desired peace with Burgundy; with England there could be no peace until Burgundy had been placated or subdued, and they—the English—had returned to their own country.

On the very day of the coronation at Rheims an embassy came from the Duke of Burgundy, professedly to negotiate peace, but really to gain time to complete plans altogether opposite and to allow the advance from Calais to Paris of the English forces. The Duke, while professing a desire to make peace, was sending recruits from Picardy to the English army.

Against the advice of St. Joan, the King, instead of marching to the relief of Paris,

lingered at Rheims, conferring with the envoys. Even after the treachery of the Duke had been made clear and they were on their way the King dawdled, hesitated, not marching on Compiègne, as would have been logical, and finally making a truce of fifteen days with the Duke of Burgundy, who assured him that at the end of that time he might have Paris for his own. At least so he told the Maid, who was impatient of his slow progress. He may have been as credulous as he seemed or really indifferent as to the fate of his kingdom. Be that as it may, St. Joan was not of his mind. She had brought his army together and was now resolved to hold it together in the face of fearful odds.

"Although the truce is made," she wrote, "I am not content, and am not certain that I will keep it. If I do it will be merely for the sake of the King's honor, and in case they do not deceive the blood royal, for I will

keep the King's army in readiness, at the end of the fifteen days, if peace is not made."

The action of St. Joan, at this time, is remarkable. It will be seen by the tone of her letter that she considered herself responsible for the army of the King, as indeed she was. She was only seventeen, but she had long had familiar intercourse with supernatural beings, had fulfilled the promises made to her sovereign, and, apart from her heavenly intercourse, possessed a fund of sharp, common sense, and knowledge of military tactics which he would have done well to respect and imitate. But St. Joan could not save her King against his will. If he had followed the advice of St. Joan all would have been well with him and France. She had not had much experience, but good judgment and a true insight were hers. And it was not in the hour of defeat, but in the hour of triumph, that her first discouragement came.

St. Joan said to her judges: "It was in Easter week that I was on the ramparts of Melieu. St. Catherine and St. Margaret warned me that I should be captured before Midsummer Day, that so it must needs be; nor must I be afraid or astounded but take all things well, for God would help me. So they spoke almost every day. And I prayed that when I was taken I might die in that hour without wretchedness of long captivity. But the Voices said that so it must be. Often I asked the hour, which they told me not—had I known the hour I would not have gone into battle."

There was a touch of human nature. St. Joan had believed implicitly in what the Voices had told her, therefore it had never occurred to her to doubt that she would be taken. Yet with a pathos which betrayed her youth and simplicity she says: "If I had known the hour I would not have gone into battle"! It was at Compiègne that St.

JOAN OF ARC'S TRIUMPHANT ENTRY INTO ORLEANS

Joan was left almost alone—her men, panic-stricken, having fled before the superior numbers of the Duke of Burgundy. There remained with her only the Squire d'Aulon, his brother, and her own two brothers, who had joined the army after the coronation of the King. Surrounded in the meadow which she had bravely refused to leave with her flying soldiers, she was dragged from her horse and declared a prisoner.

The soldiers, overjoyed at her capture, led the Maid to their quarters. She would have preferred death to surrender, but not so her captors. It is wonderful what fear she had already inspired in the hearts of the enemy, who in view of her humble origin, youth, and inexperience, considered her in league with the evil one, as her countrymen believed her favored by God. It was at this time that the rumor began to be spread that St. Joan was a witch, a sorceress, a woman possessed by

devils. And the punishment of all such criminals was death—death at the stake.

Already, in the minds of those who were later to be her accusers and judges, had the shadow of the maid's coming fate taken dark and ominous shape. From the first the English had declared their intention of burning St. Joan alive, should she be captured. They meant to make quick work of one who had in an incredibly short space of time gathered together the straggling forces of the rightful King of France, bravely summoned him to do the bidding of the Lord, which had been revealed to her, caused him to be crowned at Rheims, and later again reassured his wavering troops, whom, however, she could not hold, because of the folly and indifference of their sovereign. The English did not propose that the foothold they had gained in France should be taken away from them by the hands of a girl deluded or bewitched, whichever she might be.

It was Jean de Luxembourg who finally delivered the maid to the English, a man of her own blood, a Frenchman, but in the pay of the Duke of Burgundy and of the English King.

And it is here that the most infamous of St. Joan's persecutors appears upon the scene.

In July, Pierre Cauchon, a former Franciscan and Bishop of Beauvais, who for his unexemplary conduct had been expelled from his See, a coward and traitor, also in the pay of England, presented himself to Jean de Luxembourg, saying that St. Joan was a heretic and a sorceress, and should, on the payment of ten thousand pounds in gold, be delivered into the hands of the English King. False to his King, to his country and to his ecclesiastical oath, Cauchon hesitated at no treachery, violating every principle of honor and truth.

While he was endeavoring to accomplish his end, St. Joan made an attempt to escape

from the Tower of Beaurevoir, where she was confined. The rope by which she was descending broke and she fell to the ground, a distance of sixty feet. She was picked up, having suffered little injury from her fall, which would seem to have been certain death. But no! For the valiant Maid was reserved a death more cruel and ignominious, a death second only in ignominy to that of her crucified Saviour.

After this she was confined in the Castle of Rouen, where she was kept constantly in chains. Cauchon was paid 750 *livres* (about one hundred and fifty dollars) for his infamous work, and, greatest injustice of all, appointed to conduct her trial.

The English, although they were now in possession of her body, pretended to wish to do St. Joan the justice of being tried by her own countrymen — well knowing that she had many enemies, since her short-lived day of triumph had passed. French priests and

lawyers sat in judgment upon her, French witnesses condemned her, a French executioner lit the fires that surrounded her on the day of her immolation.

And through it all her King kept silent; not one protest did he make against the infamy of her trial, not once did he send her a word of comfort or counsel. From henceforward it was decreed that St. Joan must travel her Calvary alone. The common people, who had been the first to believe in St. Joan, remained faithful to her to the last. At Tours every one, priests and laity, remained her friends and champions. Public prayers were offered for her deliverance, clergy and people marching in procession, walking barefoot. A prayer offered at that time in the far-off churches at Dauphiny has come down to us.

"Almighty and everlasting Father, who, of Thine unspeakable mercy and marvelous goodness hast caused a maiden to arise for

the uplifting and preservation of France and for the confusion of its enemies, and hast permitted her, by their hands, to be cast into prison, as she labored to obey Thy holy commandments, grant to us, we beseech Thee, through the intercession of the ever Blessed Virgin and all the saints, that she may be delivered from their power without, and finally may accomplish the same work which Thou hast commanded her. Give ear, Almighty God, to the prayers of Thy people, and through the Sacrament of which we have partaken and by the intercession of the ever Blessed Virgin and all the saints, break in pieces the fetters of the Maid, who labored to perform the work which Thou hast appointed her and now by our enemies is held in prison. Grant that she, by Thy goodness and mercy, may go forth to finish unhurt that which remains for her to accomplish, through Jesus Christ, Our Lord."

From the tenor of this prayer it would ap-

pear that Masses had been offered and the Holy Table approached by the people in supplication for the release of the Maid from the hands of her enemies.

CHAPTER VII

CAUCHON WEAVES A NET ABOUT ST. JOAN

It was in January that Pierre Cauchon began to assemble his court. England, not wishing to incur the odium which might result from it, gave Cauchon a free hand in the trial, in order that it might seem that she was being tried by her own countrymen. It is notable that no Englishman appeared there. St. Joan, who still had faith in her friendly compatriots, had asked in vain that some of her judges be taken from among them.

She had been in captivity nine months, during which time she had been taken from place to place, subjected to all kinds of indignities which had, indeed, broken her bodily strength, but not her dauntless spirit.

She had been asked, time and again, to resume her woman's dress, but she had refused to do so, because the warlike mission on which she had been sent "was not yet finished."

When St. Joan appeared before her judges, men skilled in the law, in politics, in statecraft and duplicity, she did not shrink or vacillate. They saw before them a slender girl of nineteen, dressed in a page's suit of black, her short black hair framing her small pale face, lit up by a pair of large, gray, candid eyes, fearless, yet not bold, long lashes falling modestly on her smooth cheeks, or uplifted in firm denial of the accusations brought against her as the moments passed. Calm, cool, and undismayed, meeting each subtle question with the skill of a lawyer, or turning venom into harmlessness with the simplicity of a child who did not know the meaning of hypocrisy and treachery, the Maid founded her faith on the promises that had been made to her, her strength on the

whisperings of the Voices, which never deserted her in this last great battle of her life.

St. Joan was tried for witchcraft and not a single scrap of evidence was produced to show that she had ever had any dealing whatsoever with the powers of darkness. She was condemned as a witch after this mockery of a trial, which proved beyond a doubt, even to her enemies, that her soul was white as snow.

Required to take an oath, she answered with great prudence:

"I do not know on what you wish to question me; perhaps you will ask me about things which I ought not to tell you."

And again: "Of my father and my mother, and of what I did after taking the road to France, willingly will I swear; but of the revelations which have come to me from God to no one will I speak, save to Charles — my King."

Poor St. Joan! Faithful to the last to

a cowardly monarch, who never by word or deed ever again acknowledged that she had served him well!

"From whence do you come?" they asked.

"Well you know from whence I come," she replied. "Nevertheless, I will tell you that Domremy is my birthplace and I am well-known there from that day."

"Who taught you to pray?"

"From my father and mother I learned my *Pater,* my *Ave Maria,* and my *Credo.* From whom else should I have learned them? And very well you know that there is not a child in Domremy who has not been taught to pray."

"Repeat your *Pater.*"

There was a belief in those days that a witch could only say the Lord's Prayer backward. St. Joan knew this well, and although the recitation of the Lord's Prayer in the proper manner would have been, in the minds of many, a refutation of the charge of

witchcraft on her part, she refused to fall in with the purpose of her captors and replied with great adroitness:

"Here is no place for the Lord's Prayer. In confession I will say it willingly."

"What did you learn to do in Domremy?" was asked of her.

St. Joan replied:

"All that a woman should know of household tasks I learned to do; to spin and sew. In sewing and spinning I fear no woman in Rouen."

"From whence do your Voices come?"

"They come to me from God."

"Do you know if you are in the grace of God?"

"If I am not, may God place me there; if I am, so may God keep me. I should be the saddest in all the world if I knew that I was not in the grace of God."

These questions were not all asked the Maid at one time, but during the different

days of her trial. Once the judges tried to confuse her, speaking all together or interrupting each other.

"Fair Sirs," she said, calmly, sweeping them with her steadfast eyes, "one after another, I pray you!"

"What have you to say of our Lord the Pope, and who is the true Pope?" they inquired.

"Are there two Popes?" the Maid answered adroitly, and they were silent.

Cauchon, commenting on her attempted escape from the Tower of Beaurevoir, forbade her to leave the prison without permission, under pain of being punished for the crime of heresy, though what heresy had to do with her desire of freedom it is difficult to imagine.

St. Joan raised her head and answered him unfalteringly, as follows:

"I do not accept such prohibition. If ever I do escape no one shall reproach me with

having broken my word to any one, whoever it may be. Is is not lawful and natural for a prisoner to wish to escape, and to try to do so?"

"Did those of your party firmly believe that you were sent by God?" was asked of her.

"I do not know if they believed it. Refer to themselves in that matter," was the grave answer. "But even though they do not believe it, yet am I sent by God!"

Once they inquired,

"Does St. Margaret speak English?"

She regarded her questioners gravely.

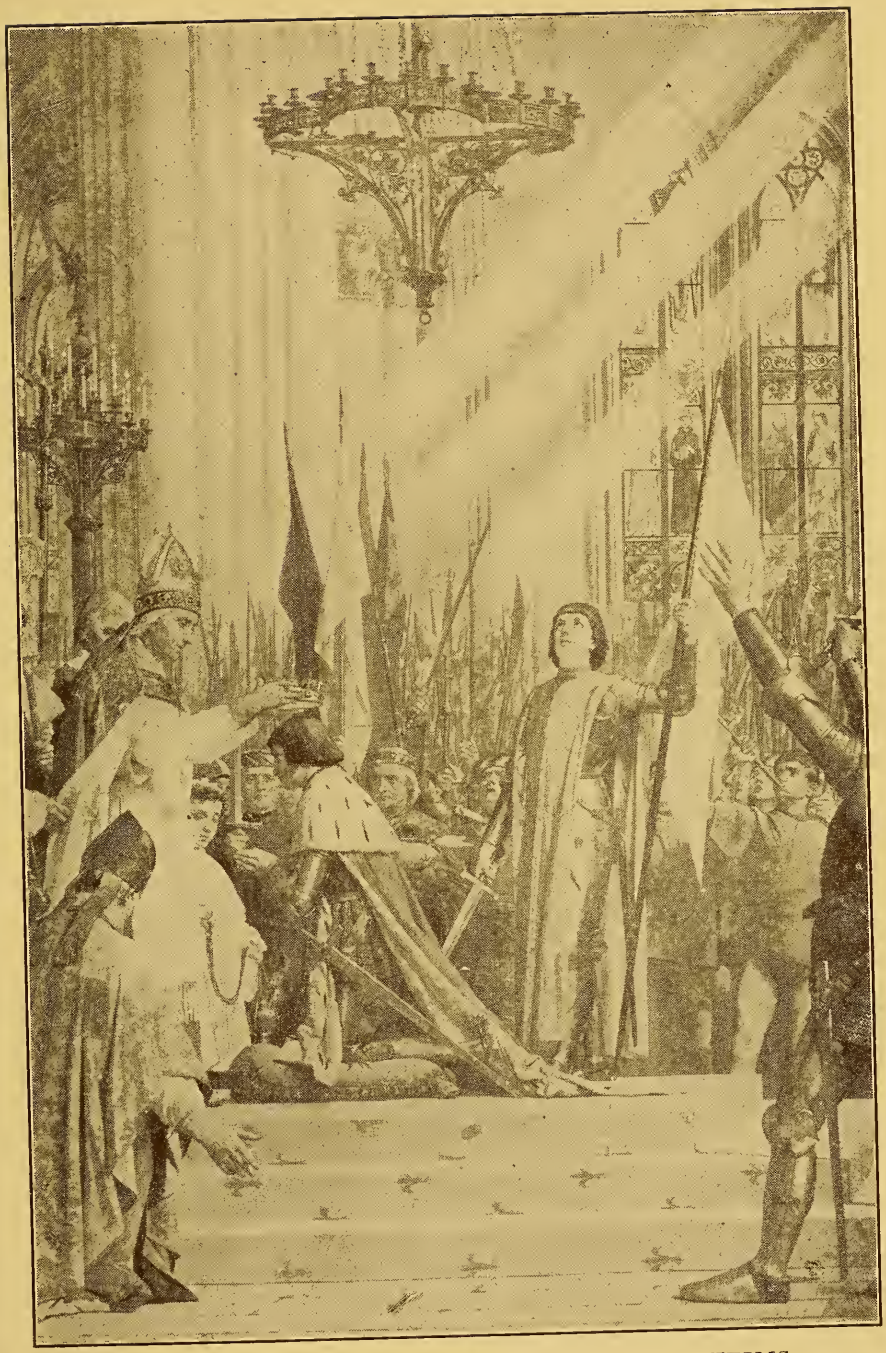
"Why should she speak English to me, who do not understand it? Why should she speak English when she is not on the English side?"

We fancy a smile must have sought the lips of some of her sober-minded accusers at this astute reply.

There were six public examinations at the

trial. As one of her jailers, Massieu, was leading the Maid from the courtroom to the prison they passed the chapel of the Castle. The Host was in the Tabernacle, and St. Joan begged leave to "kneel and adore her Lord." Permission was granted her. It was done several times. A satellite of Cauchon, d'Estivet, more cruel even than his master, once saw the incident and attacked Massieu for having permitted the favor. Thenceforth she was not allowed the privilege, and always as they reached the chapel she would inquire in a sweet, low voice,

"Is not the Body of Our Lord in the Chapel?" And to the affirmative reply she would bend her head in adoration as she passed, comforted and soothed that her God was there.



THE CORONATION OF CHARLES VII AT RHEIMS

CHAPTER VIII

ST. JOAN'S SECOND TRIAL

As Cauchon had not been able to convict St. Joan either of being an impostor or one in league with the evil one, her answers during the trial having made her many friends and brought over to her side men who had previously doubted her, he was at a loss how to strengthen the cause of the prosecution.

He was resolved to destroy the Maid under any pretext, and finally determined to bring against her the charge of heresy and rebellion against the Church. To this end he proceeded to have her questioned privately, as the judgment of her hearers at her public trial had been favorable to her cause. To have been accused of insubordination to the Church by two such men as

Cauchon and d'Estivet, his colleague, would have been from their previous conduct not a surprising thing. But not for one moment did St. Joan confound these arch-deceivers, who had no authority from the Church, with the governing powers of the great body of which she was a member. To any one who observes the fearlessness of her answers, their courage and coolness, joined to the shrewdness with which she parried and confronted their foolish and irrelevant questions, must go far toward convincing the mind of the reality of her divine mission.

Fearful of the judgment of honest men against him, Cauchon had commanded the attendance of Brother Isambard de la Pierre, a Franciscan of piety, honesty, and good repute. This decision of Cauchon resulted in St. Joan's favor, as Brother Isambard at once became convinced of her absolute sincerity, by reason of the extraordinary manner in which she replied to all the ques-

tions, which were selected with a view of confusing and condemning her. He became her very good friend and remained so until her last hour.

Said he, in his declaration after the Maid's death, "Such difficult, crafty, subtle questions were put to poor Joan that the great clerks and learned doctors present would have found it hard to answer them."

"Are you willing to submit to the Church?" asked Cauchon.

"What is the Church?" answered wise St. Joan, with another question. "So far as it is you I will not submit to your judgment, because you are my deadly enemy."

"Would you submit to the judgment of the Pope?"

"Take me to him," replied St. Joan, "and I shall be content."

But that was the farthest thing from Cauchon's thoughts. Brother Isambard, who saw that whatever happened, St. Joan

would never be justified as long as she remained in the hands of her enemy, advised her to submit to the General Council, then sitting at Basle, which, he assured her, would do her justice.

"Oh!" she replied. "If at that place there are any who are on our side I am quite willing to submit to the Council of Basle."

"Hold your tongue, in the devil's name!" shouted Cauchon, and told the clerk to make no note of her answer—which would have been in her favor, as it evinced her willingness to submit to the highest authority.

Whereupon St. Joan cried:

"What is for me you never write down —what is against me you never fail to write. I appeal—"

"She appeals," wrote the clerk—and was ordered to write no further. And it stands thus on the records to this day.

"Do you believe in the Church militant?" they asked her.

"What do you mean by that?" answered the simple Maid, unskilled in aught of religion but the science of prayer.

"Do you believe in the Church triumphant?" they inquired, seeking still more to confuse her.

Again St. Joan asked them to make their meaning clear. When they had explained, with her accustomed wariness, fearing some trick, she besought them to allow her to consider it until the afternoon.

Again the merciless questioning was resumed.

"Do you know if St. Catherine and St. Margaret hate the English?" they asked her.

"They love what God loves: they hate what God hates."

"Does God hate the English?"

"Of the love or hate God may have for the English or of what He will do for their souls, I know nothing, but I know quite well they will be put out of France, except

those who shall die there, and that God will send victory to the French against the English."

"Was God for the English when they were prospering in France?"

"I do not know if God hated the French; but I believe He wished them to be defeated for their sins, if they were in sin."

They could not confound her.

Holy Week was approaching. She begged permission to hear Mass on Palm Sunday and to receive the Holy Eucharist on Easter Day. It was not granted her. That afternoon, Isambard de la Pierre, accompanied by Brother Guillaume Duval and Jean de la Fontaine, went to the prison to give her some advice. The English Earl of Warwick, who had been one of the attendants at the private trial and had observed that Brother Isambard had endeavored to help St. Joan in her answers, by nudging

her with his elbow and making signs to her, happened to be near.

"Why did you touch that wicked person this morning, making many signs?" he exclaimed. "*Mort bleu,* villain! If I see you again taking trouble to deliver her and to advise her for her good, I will have you thrown into the Seine!"

After that Brother Guillaume fled to his convent and remained there, and Brother Isambard, whether through fear of what might happen to himself, or thinking it better for St. Joan's cause that she should not provoke her enemies, kept a close silence. But he did not desert her until she needed him no more.

CHAPTER IX

THE NET GROWS STRONGER

On the 23d of May, St. Joan was again summoned before the Court. It had been decreed by her enemies that she must die. She had been tried for sorcery and heresy, and neither charge had been proven against her. A paper was drawn up, in which, in obscure language, she was made to say that she had deceived her countrymen in regard to her mission, and that her Voices were illusions.

The paper which she was asked to sign, and which she did sign under threat of torture and death, was not, many witnesses have averred, the one so carefully prepared by her so-called judges. That to which St. Joan had meant to put her signature, and

which had been read to her, said only, in substance, that she submitted in all things to the Church. The other paper which was given her to sign and which she had never heard read, was much longer and contained a specific denial of all her claims to having been a messenger of God.

But, whether under threat of death by fire, worn out, ill, persecuted by her enemies and deserted by those who owed her deepest gratitude, St. Joan did not sign the original with a knowledge of its contents. The fact must never be forgotten that the signature was extorted from her by threats and that as soon as the Maid realized what she had done she made all the amends in her power by declaring that she had been deceived and knew not the importance of what she was doing when she put the final seal on the triumph of her enemies.

We will not admit that she did put her signature to the paper save under the belief

that it was something different from what it really was; but, for the sake of argument, if such were the case, is hers the only incident in history where one of the chosen of God has lapsed and returned again to His love and service? The Old Testament contains numerous similar instances. The saints are human; if they were angels where would be the victory over passions and inclinations, with which angels never struggle because they are free from all that clogs and hampers heavenly perfection?

In the New Testament the same thing occurred, and the same thing will occur again until the end of time. Was it not Peter, the first of the apostles, who denied the Saviour—Peter, the Rock on which He built His Church, against which the gates of hell have never prevailed and never shall prevail? Was not his repentance all the more glorious for that reason, the record of his subsequent life, tear-furrowed cheeks, and heroic death

all the more grand? We are to believe that out of the thousands who followed Our Lord during the three years of His mission on earth He chose for His apostles the twelve most worthy to be His helpers and successors. How many of them followed Him to Calvary? Only one—the loving and beloved St. John. Yet did they not all, after the Holy Ghost came upon them, go forth bravely to preach His Gospel, whom they had for a time feared to follow except in the darkness and afar off; and in His name, were not all—except St. John—martyred at last?

On May 9th the judges proposed to put St. Joan to the torture if she would not confess. When she heard of their plans she must have had a fear and presentiment that she would not be able to hold out against them, for she said:

"In very truth, if you were to cause my limbs to be torn from my body and my soul

to be driven out I would say nothing different. And if I should say something different I should always be obliged to tell you afterward that you had made me say it by force."

They had promised the Maid that if she would sign the paper they would release her from her English captors and place her in the hands of the Church. But this was not done. When Cauchon was reminded of this promise he brutally waved it aside and said,

"Take her back whence you brought her!"

One of the crimes charged against St. Joan—and her enemies made it a very heinous one—was that she had worn man's attire and persisted in wearing it, against the teachings of the Church. They made no such objection to her garments while she was fighting in the field and leading the King's troops to victory. Her refusal to put on woman's dress was well-founded. Thrown into a gloomy prison where there

were only men to guard and tend her, she persisted in retaining her military garb as a means of safety and protection. She had promised to resume the dress of a woman as soon as she should be taken from the company of men and soldiers, but she was not set at liberty; therefore, as her judges had not fulfilled their promise she was absolved from hers. On Sunday morning the Maid said to her guards,

"Unchain me, that I may rise!"

One of them then took away her woman's dress, which had been placed near her, and put in its place her former garments, saying to her, "Get up!"

"Sir," St. Joan replied, "you know I have promised to put on my woman's garments, and that I am forbidden any more to dress as a man."

After a long argument, and seeing that unless she wished to lie in bed permanently she must obey, St. Joan finally resumed the

dress of a man, which she wore thereafter, being unable to persuade her guards to provide her with any others. And yet, in the final summing up of the charges against her, Cauchon laid stress on the circumstance, saying that in spite of her promise she declined to wear woman's clothes. He did not explain, however, that his part of the agreement had not been fulfilled.

St. Joan spent Easter Day in her cell, although she had been promised that she might hear Mass, on the foregoing condition. The next morning Cauchon paid her a visit, to find her ill and in bed. Her brave young spirit had at last broken under the indignities and injustice to which she had been subjected; she was suffering from severe nausea and fever.

Warwick and Beaufort, fearing that she might die in prison, hastened to send her medical attendance.

"Do your best for her," commanded the

Earl, "for my King would on no account have her die a natural death. He bought her dear and holds her dear; she shall die by the law and be burned."

"Why be burned—why die?" whispered some faithful spirits to one another. "What hath she done—what hath been proven against her?" But they could not speak their whispers aloud.

Cauchon made a long speech of exhortation. When he had finished, St. Joan said:

"I thank you for what you say to me for my salvation. It seems to me, seeing how ill I am, that I am in great danger of death. If it be that God do His pleasure on me, I ask of you that I may have confession and my Saviour, and that I may be put in blessed ground."

"Do you believe that the Holy Scriptures have been revealed by God?" asked the hypocritical Cauchon.

"Why weary me forever with the same

questionings? *You* know it well—*I* know it well."

They called her a heathen and a "Saracen."

St. Joan replied from her bed of anguish, "I am a good Christian; I have been baptized. I shall die a good Christian. I love God and serve Him. I wish to maintain the Church with all my might."

Could anything have been more clear, more fearless, more positive?

Baffled, they sought to torture her by refusing her the consolation of the Sacraments. It was the worst thing they could do to the poor, suffering body and faithful soul. They turned and left her to the rough ministrations of her jailers.

CHAPTER X

FALSE CHARGES

It may be well here to enumerate some of the false and ridiculous charges that were brought against St. Joan, nearly all of which contradicted one another and were used at the pleasure of her accusers, both for and against her.

She would not renounce her belief that her Saints and Voices were good; she could not—for they to her were realities. Even supposing they were illusions, St. Joan was not to be blamed for thinking otherwise; many sincere and truthful persons have been the victims of illusions. That does not constitute a crime.

She believed herself given to understand

and predict future events—neither was that a crime.

St. Joan wore a male dress, and while wearing it received the Sacraments. When she was willing to renounce it for that of a woman, she was not furnished with feminine garments. That was not her fault.

This "Saint of the Fatherland" used the words *Jesus Maria,* as her motto, and said the course of the war would show which party was right. From the beginning the name of the Lord has been the watchword of His children, why then, in the case of St. Joan, who time and again professed her adherence to the Church, should it be called blasphemy?

She obeyed her Saints in many things, but toward the end not in all—and yet she was condemned both for obeying and disobeying them.

She refused to submit herself to the judgment of the Church; which was untrue, for

she was refused permission to appeal to the Council of Basle, which she was eager to do.

All of this was the farce which prefaced the fearful, closing tragedy.

It was decided that St. Joan must die; a decision, which in the hearts of her persecutors had been made as soon as she was captured. The majority were villains, the best of them cowards, afraid to utter the conviction that lay in the bottom of their hearts.

The Maid was ordered to appear at the Old Market of Rouen on May 30th. It did not take long to read the charges against her, futile as they were, nor to pronounce her doom. St. Joan heard them in a sort of stupor. We may reasonably infer that until this moment she had hoped, and placed some reliance, however slender, upon the shifty promises that had been made her.

When all was finished she turned to Cauchon, and cried out boldly:

"Bishop, through you I die, wherefore I arraign you before God!" The cry has followed him adown the centuries, setting the seal upon his impiety and infamy.

Alas! Poor St. Joan of Arc! Where now were the Voices that bade her hasten to the succor of her King that he might be victorious over his enemies and be crowned at Rheims? Their mission was finished when that part of St. Joan's appointed task was ended; it is but logical to believe that whatever she did afterward was done independently of them.

All that was left for her Saints to do was to sustain the Maid's courage until the last dark ordeal should be over; to strengthen and comfort her in the dreadful termination of her brave young life, to receive her soul in Paradise when the torture and fire should have completed their work.

Where now were the admiring multitudes

that followed the fearless Maid's footsteps from Orleans to Rheims? Hidden behind their shutters with fearful, timid or eager, greedy eyes to deprecate or approve the fate which had been adjudged her.

Where the men-at-arms that had followed at their beloved leader's bidding to the fatal field where her enemies had captured her? Powerless or unwilling to make an effort in her behalf; passing her prison doors with hurrying feet and averted eyes, lest perhaps they might catch a sight of her behind the barred window, and to her silent look of supplication be suspected of making her a hopeful signal or a glance of friendly compassion.

Where now the King whose supremacy she had gone forth to proclaim and did proclaim, to whom she had given her heart's best fealty and homage, who owed to her his Kingdom and his throne? There was

not a sign that he remembered her existence, much less her glorious deeds.

The *fiat* had gone forth: the Maid of Domremy must die.

CHAPTER XI

ST. JOAN'S EXECUTION

At dawn on the morning of the 30th of May, 1431, when the guardian of the night went through the streets of Rouen, crying, "Awake, all ye who sleep! Pray God for sinners!" the city was already astir. Men and women came to their windows and gathered upon the doorsteps, looking at one another with this grim salutation: "She dies to-day!"

Permission had been granted her at the last to receive the Sacraments and the priest, Martin Ladvenu, who was to hear her confession, was deputed to call her from her last earthly sleep.

"Awake, Joan," he cried. "Awake, Joan. This day you are to be burned at the stake!"

Affrighted, the poor girl sprang up in her bed.

"Alas!" she said. "Why treat my body so horribly? It is pure, why consume it and reduce it to ashes? Ah! I would rather be beheaded seven times over than be thus burned!"

Although he who heard her last confession was one of those who had condemned her, he said, later, that in the light which at that solemn moment had penetrated his soul, struck by what passed her pure lips, he believed her to be a saint.

Her confession ended, St. Joan, humbly kneeling, received holy communion with such recollection that all who surrounded her were filled with emotion. Many sobbed and cried, intermingling their tears with the prayers for the agonizing.

"Lord, have mercy on her! Holy Mary, pray for her! Saints and angels, intercede for her!" And when, a short time later, the

cart which bore her to the place of execution passed through the streets, crowds of people who lined the way fell on their knees and cried aloud, "O Lord, have mercy on her!"

All at once a man pierced the throng, and threw himself before St. Joan. It was Loyseleur, a miserable man, who, under the plea of compassion for St. Joan, had played the part of a spy. Full of remorse he begged her pardon, but even while St. Joan, smiling benignly, sweetly made the sign of forgiveness, the English guards drove him away under threats of instant death.

At length the couch of death was reached —a couch composed of immense pieces of wood, saturated with oil. When Joan perceived it she shrank back, crying out, "Rouen! Rouen! Wilt thou, then, be my last dwelling-place?"

If her judges had had a spark of mercy they would speedily have put an end to her misery, but they once more began to utter

their long-winded exhortations and oft-repeated accusations against the hopeless victim of bigotry, jealousy, and perfidy. And while they thus discoursed, poor St. Joan's courage began to falter. Human nature could endure no more. A self-imposed martyr, eager for the sacrifice, might, no doubt, have bravely preserved his fortitude through all the long rehearsal of false charges and preachments. But St. Joan was not such a martyr. She did not want to die, and almost to the end believed that her judges would yield her to the protection of the Church, to which she had openly and willingly proclaimed her unfaltering loyalty.

For a brief space the woman prevailed over the martyr! St. Joan gave vent to the most heart-rending lamentations, declaring her innocence and imploring mercy. But as the executioners came forth to lead her to the pile, her strength and courage began to return, as if in response to her agonized

prayers to Heaven. With head erect, her voice grown stronger, in the face of the vast multitude, she cried aloud:

"It is then ordained that I must die. Nevertheless, I am not a sinner. Good, simple people, I am innocent. Be ye witnesses that I die innocent. I beseech you, men, women, little children, that you will remember me in your prayers and intercede for my salvation. Priests, I beg that you give me the offering of a Mass for the repose of my soul. If there be any here whom I have wronged I ask their pardon. If there be any who have wronged me, I forgive them."

She asked for a cross. An English soldier made one from a stick and gave it to her. St. Joan took it, kissed it fervently and placed it in her bosom. But that was not enough. She wished for the image of her Saviour. Brother Isambard, who had followed her all the way, handed her a cruci-

fix, which she pressed long and fervently to her throbbing heart.

"Oh," she cried, "let me kiss those feet which were so cruelly pierced, and this poor body, wounded for our sins. Holy Virgin, sweet Lady of Paradise, by the memory of the sufferings of thy Son, have pity on me!"

The executioner applied the torch. At the sight of the ascending flames St. Joan uttered a loud cry. Then, as Brother Isambard still continued at her side, with that kindness and thoughtfulness for others which had always distinguished her and which she was still to display almost in her very last moment, the Maid said to him:

"Brother, depart from me or you will be burned! But go beyond there, where I can see you, and hold up the crucifix before me, that I may still see it at the moment of my death."

He obeyed her, and seeking an elevation directly behind the front rows of spectators,

he held up the cross to her view and veneration.

Almost at the final moment the irrepressible Cauchon approached her, saying:

"Joan, I come to offer you my final exhortation—"

But St. Joan interrupted him, as she had already done once before in the prison.

"Bishop," she said, "through you I die."

The flames rose higher and higher.

"Water—Holy Water!" she was heard to exclaim. And then her voice grew calm, as through the rapidly enveloping smoke her form was hardly to be seen. Amid the seething fires the Maid's prayers ascended to the throne of a merciful and pitying Saviour. The gates of Paradise were opening to her. Was not this the deliverance, the great victory her Voices had promised her—this victory over sin and sorrow, injustice, persecution, and death?

Once more, from the very heart of the

flames, St. Joan called out, brave, undaunted, faithful to the end.

"My Voices were from God. . . . My Voices did not deceive me—" No more doubt, no more fear—now she knew. "Jesus! Jesus!"

It was St. Joan's last cry. In His name she had gone forth from her peasant home to the relief of France; in His name she had kept the faith of her soul; in His name she had suffered and endured until the end.

The flames roared more fiercely; a sudden outpouring of dense, black smoke concealed her entirely from the view of the spectators. When it rolled away the form of St. Joan was no longer to be seen.

In His name she had rendered up her pure soul to God.

THE DEATH OF JOAN OF ARC

CHAPTER XII

THE FRUITS OF ST. JOAN'S MARTYRDOM

THEY threw her ashes into the Seine—swallowed up in the waters that sweep down to the immensity of the sea. Twenty-five years later the findings of her trial were reversed, the treachery and perfidy of her judges revealed, and the arch-traitor, Cauchon, held up to the detestation not only of his own age but of all ages to come. It was a late compensation for all she had suffered, it is true, but it cleared her reputation in the minds of those who had doubted her sincerity and piety, and served to establish her sanctity more fully in the minds of her friends.

Since that time her memory has lived and been justified not only in song, legend, and story but in the historical written testimony

wrung from the lips of her accusers as weapons for her destruction.

Almighty God, who uses the weak ones of the earth to confound the strong, whose supreme wisdom brings good out of evil, decreed that these very weapons should be her defense and glory. But for her enemies St. Joan might have soon been forgotten—a saint in heaven, as the Church now recognizes her, but numbered among the thousands who dwell in Paradise, chosen souls whose holiness is known to God alone.

True, the siege of Orleans and the triumphal march to Rheims would still be recounted in the pages of history, a few sayings of the Maid who was noted as speaking but little might still be preserved, but the volume of her answers, which reveal to us a soul wondrously illumined by divine grace, would never have existed. The favored children of God, those whom He chooses as instruments of His justice, mercy, or

glory, more often than otherwise have to pay dearly in tears of blood, in persecution and sacrifice, for the honor of that choice.

If the ingratitude and injustice of man had not made of her a martyr, no doubt she would have passed into obscurity when her appointed work was done. The companions of her childhood, unlettered peasants of her native village, Domremy, the troops who followed her banner, the burghers of Orleans, the princes and courtiers and high men-at-arms, the faithful friar who stood by her at the stake, the executioner who fired the funeral pyre—all these would have passed away and none of the precious recollections they had of the Maid would have been left on record.

It was the bitterness of St. Joan's foes that provided against this. Investigation of their iniquitous acts called forth a mass of damaging testimony, deposed upon oath, each one of which brings a converging ray

of light to shine upon their perfidious hate and all but unparalleled injustice, as it does upon the character of the modest, gentle Maid of Domremy.

It reveals to us a saintliness and simplicity in childhood, a saintliness and modesty in the courts of kings, a saintliness and dignity in the rough camps of war, and a saintliness and heroism in the hour of death which has not been surpassed in the history of mankind.

During the past dreadful war, devotion to St. Joan of Arc, not then canonized but already pronounced Blessed, was renewed in a remarkable degree. Medals struck in her honor were carried by Protestants as well as Catholics as a protection against danger and death. It has been asserted many times that soldiers on the field were granted a vision of the Maid of France; the victory of the Marne has time and again been attributed to her intercession.

St. Joan has still work to do. She will never grow cold to the sons of her native land who so fervently besought her in their terrible hour of need; she will never forget to plant the lilies of France in the hearts of the little children, who are to be the Christian men and women of the future. It will be hers to garner the spiritual harvest of her country's need, to fill the souls of her countrymen with the fire of Christian charity, to bring back to France—eldest daughter of the Church—in full and entire completeness her old inheritance of Faith.

CHAPTER XIII

THE LESSON OF ST. JOAN'S LIFE

WHAT are the virtues which the life of St. Joan of Arc presents to our imitation? They are many.

First, her simplicity, which, when founded on religion, is a virtue most priceless—one which has always distinguished the holiest souls. St. Joan knew herself to have been chosen for a mission, wonderful in itself, but still more wonderful in that an inexperienced and unlettered peasant maiden should have been selected to do that which the great ones of earth had failed to accomplish. No doubt the Maid marveled at her visions and Voices, but she accepted and believed them, even as her dear Mother, Our Lady, had meekly

avowed herself to be the handmaid of the Lord.

Second, her discretion. St. Joan was but a child when the Voices first came to her. It would have been natural for her, even though she had been warned against it, to have revealed what she had seen and heard to some of her companions, to her mother, most likely of all to the priest of the village. But, like the Virgin Mother, she "kept all these things in her heart," until the time had arrived to act upon them, in behalf of her country and her king.

Third, her piety, cheerful and unobtrusive. There is a piety, sincere no doubt, but of a nature that can almost be called offensive. It is that which goes about with a face severe and averted from all things worldly, even the most innocent pleasures. Not such was the piety of St. Joan. She loved to pray, in the church before the Blessed Sacrament, at her bedside night and morning, in

the grounds of the old chateau where she frequently walked, telling her beads, and where, it is said, the divine call first came to her. But, though never boisterous, she was always cheerful, even gay with her companions, joining in their innocent sports, sharing their labors and their rambles, making herself one with them in every way.

Fourth, her humility. Never by look, word, or action, is it recorded, that St. Joan considered her exceptional vocation to have been accorded her through any merit of her own. Humble and respectful to her superiors, entirely unconscious with her equals that she was different from them in any particular, she went on her appointed way without a trace of any pride but that true pride which is self-respect.

Fifth, her obedience. Her chroniclers say that never once did St. Joan disobey her parents, save on one occasion, when they wished to arrange for her a marriage which

she refused to consider. She knew well that marriage and family and household joys were never to be hers. A willing instrument in the hands of God to perform His behests, the Maid had no thought but to obey the commands He had imposed upon her. For a long time after she had revealed her mission to her father and mother she was forbidden to leave home and seek the King as she had been told to do. And she obeyed them, until, having obtained their consent, however reluctant, she set forth for Vaucouleurs. When her wearisome attempt to see and tell Robert Baudricourt of her mission had resulted only in his displeasure and contempt—he had angrily told her cousin to take her back to her parents—St. Joan turned meekly once more to Domremy, obedient, but neither discouraged nor dismayed.

Sixth, her modesty and purity. Never had saint or heroine more relentless or vile

traducers than St. Joan, but her character was perhaps not more than once assailed. Pure and fair as a lily, she mingled in the camps and on the battle-fields with rough, warlike and often vicious men, but her purity covered her as with a shining mantle, and the lowest among them looked upon her as an angel, or a maiden but a little lower than the angel.

Seventh, her heroic courage.

Unused to courts, or camps, or battle-fields,
She fought as one unto the manner born,
And, scattering bloody hosts, raised, undismayed,
Her pure, white standard, that last cruel morn;
Nor faltered—though sore wounded—till they came.
A cruel hand dragged her from her horse,
Her head erect still, and her eyes aflame

E'en while they carried her, with savage
force,
Into captivity.

This heroism supported the Maid through the long, weary months of her imprisonment; through the mockery of her trial, through the agony of her awful death.

Eighth, her marvelous self-possession, which, though a desirable quality and not in itself a virtue, may become so when called into play under persecution or injustice. St. Joan was endowed with this attribute to a remarkable degree. It enabled her to confront courtiers and kings without fear or confusion, to perform wonders on the fields of battle, to marshal, arrange, and preserve those faculties so essential to one in her position, to defy and confuse her foes and accusers. It aided her to parry their attacks and demonstrate their falseness and treachery to future generations—to the world,

which, after six hundred years, stands amazed at her cleverness and success in meeting and overthrowing their futile arguments —the world, which, wondering that for centuries her cause should so long have lain in abeyance, has finally had the triumph and happiness of seeing her placed by the Church among those who are known as the saints of God.

Ninth, her charity and spirit of forgiveness. Denounce some of the most despicable of her enemies St. Joan did; but for the King who had deserted her, the false priests who had persecuted her, the judges who had condemned her the Maid asked forgiveness with her latest breath, thus imitating her Saviour, who, dying on the cross, commended His murderers to the mercy of His heavenly Father.

The lesson of St. Joan's short, chequered young life is one that may be read with profit by maids and matrons, youths and men of

years mature. To few has it been vouchsafed to be so set apart for God's instrument in the fulfillment of His decrees. But each and all can, within the limits of their calling, and capacity, follow in the footsteps of one whose virtues, though transcendent, are those which may shine and blossom in every Christian soul.

O Blessed Maid, who conquered death,
  Thy brave and blameless years
Have taught that Life's supremest breath
  Is drawn through toils and tears.

Brighter the skies above thee shine
  As centuries roll by;
Slain, not for dreams, but Truth Divine—
  The Truth that can not die!

On the 16th of May, 1920, Pentecost Sunday, St. Joan of Arc was formally canonized in Rome. The occasion was one of great

edification and splendor, citizens of all nations being present in great numbers, French of course preponderating. One hundred and forty descendants of the ancient d'Arc family attended. What pride and gratification must they not all have felt, when she, whose cause for 400 years had been slowly pressing to the front was at last proclaimed a Saint by universal Christian acceptance of her heroic sanctity.

St. Joan of Arc—Pray for us.

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